

## SNOWMOBILE SAFETY

### Equipment

1. **Helmet;** All persons riding on a snowmobile must wear a helmet at all times.
2. **Exhaust;** every snowmobile must have an adequate exhaust system in good working condition. No snowmobile shall be modified by any person in any manner that will amplify or increase total noise emission to a level greater than that emitted by that snowmobile as originally equipped. This is extremely important due to the fact that one of the biggest reasons for trail closures in an area is loud exhausts on snowmobiles.
3. **Lights;** every snowmobile must have at least one white or amber headlight and at least one red tail light with a brake light in good working condition. All other color lights are illegal.
4. **Reflective material;** every snowmobile must have a minimum of sixteen square inches of reflective material mounted on each side of the cowling. Your NYS registration numbers or plaque must be made of reflective material and can be used for your minimum reflective material.
5. **Registration numbers and validation sticker;** every snowmobile operated in NYS off of your own property must be registered in NYS. You are required to display your registration numbers on the cowling along with your validation sticker, and you must carry a copy of your registration with you. Any other placement of registration, or validation stickers are illegal. Out of state residents must also register their snowmobile in NYS and display a NYS validation sticker.
6. **Insurance;** every snowmobile operated in NYS other than on your own property, are required to have liability insurance. If you operate your snowmobile on any public or private lands owned by another person, or any portion of a roadway you are required to carry liability insurance on your snowmobile. You are also required to carry a valid insurance card with you while you are riding.

### Ages of Operation / Safety Course

- Anyone under the age of 18yrs old must have taken and completed a NYS snowmobile safety course and carry their certificate with them at all times while operating a snowmobile.
- Anyone between ages 14-18 with a valid safety certificate can operate as an adult
- Anyone between ages 10- 13 with a safety certificate can operate a snowmobile but they MUST be accompanied by a person 18yrs old or older. Accompanied means in view and within 500 feet of the person over 18 years old.
- Anyone under the age of 10 can not operate a snowmobile other than on land owned or leased by their parent or guardian.
- Snowmobile Safety Courses are offered by many local police departments, Sheriff's Offices and by local snowmobile clubs during the fall and winter season. The course is free for anyone under 18 yrs old.

### Operating your Snowmobile safely;

- **Speed;** At no time shall a snowmobile be operated at a rate of speed greater than reasonable or proper under the surrounding circumstances, but at no time shall a snowmobile be operated in excess of 55mph while on any public trail or lands.
- **Special Hazard;** No snowmobile shall operate within 100ft of another person or ice fishing shanty at a speed greater than needed to maintain forward motion.
- **Night time speed;** No snowmobile shall operate within 100ft of a dwelling between 12 midnight and 600am at a speed greater than needed to maintain forward motion. Visibility is drastically reduced after dark and during snowing or blowing snow conditions. Slow down for your safety as well as others. .
- **Reckless operation;** No snowmobile shall be operated in a careless, reckless, or negligent manner so as to unreasonably endanger the person or property of another or to cause injury or damage to another.

- Trespassing; it is unlawful to trespass on the private property owned by another person without their permission. This includes riding on some else's property without their permission. This includes riding off the designated trail. Please be aware that this is a major concern for property owners and the biggest reason that trails are forced to be closed!
- Stay on the trail; the trail system has been carefully planned and marked out by the snowmobile clubs for your safety and enjoyment. Operating off the trail may not only upset landowners but you may miss hazard markings, curve ahead signs, and stop signs all of which could cause an unsafe situation for you and your passenger. Pay close attention to these signs and remember that they can be hard to see with fresh snow on them or if it is snowing or blowing snow.
- Accident reporting; every snowmobile involved in an accident where property damage is in excess of \$1000, or resulting in personal injury shall report the same to the Sheriff. Every snowmobile involved in an accident below the threshold of \$1000 must have the operator stop and give his information to the operator of the other sled or to the property owner that sustained damage. Failure to report an accident is a crime.
- Operation; of a snowmobile on a working railroad, or on property owned by another without their permission such as in areas off of the public snowmobile trail are illegal.
- Towing; you must use a rigid tow bar when towing a sled or tube behind your snowmobile with a passenger. Failure to use a rigid tow bar can cause the rider to swing and cause serious injury. You must also unload passengers before crossing roads.
- Roadways; It is illegal to operate a snowmobile on any roadway except for the following conditions. These do NOT apply to a controlled access highway (I90 or I86)
  - It is a designated and properly signed snowmobile road (unplowed highway)
  - You are crossing the roadway at a 90 deg angle and have made a complete stop before crossing, and must yield to any oncoming traffic.
  - You can travel on the shoulder of the roadway for a distance not to exceed 500 yards to gain access to a trailhead, or to avoid hazards such as culverts or ditches but you must stop and yield to vehicles before doing so.
  - You may travel on the outer banks of roadways to gain access to trails, but not on the property of other persons without their permission.
- Failure to yield or comply; All snowmobiles must comply with the requests of police officers, law enforcement and/ or emergency snowmobiles, in addition trail groomers have the right of way at all times.
- Failure to answer summons; if you are issued a summons for a violation the same rules apply as for any arrest. You are required by law to answer the charges in a court of law and failure to do so can result in suspension of your registration privileges, an arrest warrant, or both.
- Underage operation after consuming alcohol; No person under the age of 21 shall operate a snowmobile just like with an automobile, after consuming alcohol. For the purpose of this section a blood alcohol level of .02 to .07 shall be the guide lines for charging a person. Any blood alcohol level above .07 will constitute a snowmobiling while intoxicated.

- SWI; snowmobiling while intoxicated is just as serious on a snowmobile as in an automobile. The BAC levels are at .08 and the fines carried are similar. Refusal to submit to a breath test will result in the suspension of your privilege to operate a in this state.
- Please respect our landowners; the hundreds of miles of snowmobile trails in our county would not be possible without the cooperation of the numerous landowners who so generously give us their permission to use their property to construct the trails. Please respect them by staying on the designated trail, not littering, and operating in reasonable manner especially near houses and other people
- Join a snowmobile club; again the hundreds of miles of trails in our county would not be possible without the numerous volunteers that help to construct them. Please join a club and help out. You also get a discount on your NYS registration if you are a club member!
- Frozen bodies of water; although there are currently no laws preventing riding on frozen bodies of water, we highly recommend that you stay off them. In addition to varying temperatures, many things can occur under the ice that can cause it to be unstable. There are natural springs, vegetation growth, and ice shifting that all cause unsafe surface conditions. If you fall through the ice not only does your snowmobile sink, your heavy clothing will weigh you down, and make getting out of the water very difficult. If you are unable to get out of the water, you will become hypothermic and become unable to help yourself at all. This is the cause for many cold water drowning. In addition if anyone happens to realize you fell through, you will then be putting other men and women at risk while they attempt to rescue you.